

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending.

Claims 1-12 stand rejected.

Claim 1 has been amended.

Claims 1-12 are presented herein for further consideration on the merits.

No new matter has been added.

Applicants begin by noting that in the Specification, the term “reticulation” has been amended and replaced by “cross-linking” which is a clearer and better translation. The term “cross-linking” is used throughout the specification, therefore amending paragraph [0054] by replacing the term “reticulation” with “cross-linking” provides for a more consistent application.

Examiner has rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Examiner asserts that the claims contain subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Examiner contends that Applicants’ amendment of the claims to recite that it is a liquid preform which is drawn is not supported in the instant specification.

Applicants respectfully disagree with Examiner’s written description rejection and refer Examiner to the following citations from the instant specification that support the added term “liquid” of claim 1:

In the embodiment of Fig. 1, after withdrawing the closure member 61 and the controlled application of pressure to the system the liquid preform flows along an axis into the conical area and is thus brought to the calibrated die 6 (see paragraph [0065]).

In the embodiment of Fig. 2, after withdrawing the closure member 61 and applying a controlled pressure to the system 1', the perform flows into the area of the conical member 4 until it reaches the die 6 (see paragraph [0077]).

Hence, after withdrawing the closure member 61 of the system (1,1'), the liquid preform is drawn. After drawing, said liquid preform is hardened by crosslinking (see paragraphs [0079-0081]; Fig. 3).

Therefore, it stems from the above that between the calibrated die 6 of the system (1,1') and the crosslinking step (with UV source 20-Fig. 3), the preform is in the same form, i.e. liquid perform.

Hence, the present application clearly suggests that the drawing step is occurring to the preform while it is in a liquid state. Furthermore, the drawing of the preform according to the invention is simply done by gravity, since the preform is in a liquid state directly before the drawing step. Applicants agree with the Examiner that plastic being drawn or some portion thereof is fluid at least to the extent that it can be stretched. However, applicants define "liquid" in the present invention as capable of being drawn by gravity alone, with the viscosity from 1 to 5 Pa.s (pascal-second). A viscosity of a preform outside the range of 1-5 Pa.s may not be ideally sufficient to allow drawing by gravity alone, and therefore such a preform is not considered liquid according to the

present invention. This definition of liquid in the present invention is supported by the following citations from the specification.

In order to draw said liquid perform, the viscosity of said preform is from 1 Pa.s to 5 Pa.s. (see paragraph [0066]).

This range of viscosity facilitates implementing the method according to the invention because it gives relatively fluid compositions (see paragraph [0078]).

The liquid preform flows along the axis X to the calibrated die 6 [0065], the viscosity of said liquid preform in the calibrated die 6 being from 1 to 5 Pa.s.

Turning now to the substantive rejections, the Examiner has maintained his 103(a) rejection of claims 1-6 and 12 as being unpatentable over Kim et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,563,994) in view of Perrin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,576,166); claims 7-11 as obvious in view of Kim and Perrin; claims 8, 10, and 11 as obvious over Kim; and claims 7 and 9 as anticipated by Kim. Examiner argues that the fact that Kim's arrangement chooses to solidify the preform prior to drawing does not impart patentability to the instant claims. He claims that a drawing operation would require that the fiber being drawn, or some portion thereof, is fluid at least to the extent that it can be stretched.

Applicants amend claim 1 and respectfully submit the following remarks in response to Examiner's rejection in addition to the arguments submitted in the previous answer. The drawing step of the present invention concerns a preform in a liquid state. The claim calls for a "liquid" having a viscosity from 1-5 Pa.s. The preform in the drawing step of the prior art may be stretchable as the Examiner asserts, however, the perform falls outside the viscosity range as set forth in claim 1 of the present invention.

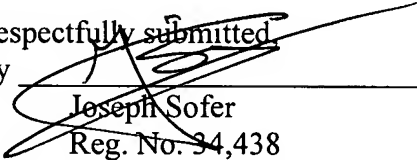
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Therefore, the preform during the drawing step of the prior art is not in a liquid state, as claimed herein, so that it may be drawn by gravity alone. The prior art does not disclose the drawing of a liquid perform with the viscosity of 1-5 Pa.s. For example, Kim et al. [column 6, lines 10-15] states that it is preferable that the viscosities are not very low, rather in the case that the viscosity of the material is low it is preferable to carry out polymerization to increase the viscosity up to a desired level.

Furthermore, U.S. Patent No. 6,576,166 to Perrin et al. [column 7, lines 18-25] employs a cooling system in one embodiment that enables the viscosity of the mixture to be increased up to a value in excess of 50 Pa.s.

As such, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art does not teach or suggest all of the elements as claimed in claim 1, and respectfully request that the rejection of this claim be withdrawn. Likewise, as claims 2-12 depend from claim 1, these claims should be allowed for at least the same reason.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims 1-12 are in condition for allowance, the earliest possible notice of which is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner feels that an interview would facilitate the prosecution of this Application he is invited to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted
By 
Joseph Sofer
Reg. No. 34,438
Sofer & Haroun, L.L.P.
317 Madison Avenue, Suite 910
New York, NY 10017
(212) 697-2800

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